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## Colonialism in the *Stateless* Societies of Africa: A Historical Overview of Administrative Policies and Enduring Consequences in Southern Zaria Districts, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *An unapologetic perspective in the study of colonialism in Africa is currently reasserting itself forcefully. It sees the colonial experience as a mere sporadic change initiated by the need to use traditional institutions in the administration of the natives. It assumes that the responses of the natives had imposed some restrictions on the creative disposition of the colonial overlords. With evidence from some Stateless societies of Nigeria this article shows that colonialism had been occasioned by currents that denaturalized the social order to the extent that traditional institutions used lost their traditionalness hence ushering changes that were decisive in nature and far reaching in consequence. Furthermore, colonialism altered the direction of history in a manner that laid the basis for the sprouting of dividing walls around different cultural clusters thereby calcifying flexible identities with negative consequences on contemporary political developments.*

**Key words:** Colonialism, Colonial Administration, Indirect Rule, *Stateless* Societies, Southern Zaria, Northern Nigeria

### Introduction

The literature on colonialism, the social structures it engendered and its enduring imprints in the wake of its encounter with the African, his institutional and cultural constructs have expanded. An unapologetic and Eurocentric perspective which perceives the colonial engagement as a mere episode in the transformation of the native, his institutions and society has been the most persistent. The presumption here is that the colonial experience amounted to quick ‘fixes’, simple ‘repackaging’ and necessary ‘redrawing’ of the colonial landscape in the encounter between the colonialists and the native (Ekeh 1980). The revisionist version of this perspective implies that in the encounter the native was not just a passive receptor of colonial crafting but rather an active participant whose attitudes or responses had imposed a degree of restriction on the resourcefulness of the colonial overlords (Spear 2003; Glassman 2004; Ranger 1993). For example, Spear argues that “Colonialism was not simply a unilateral political phenomenon...Colonial authorities sought to incorporate pre-existing polities...into colonial structures.... Attempts to invent tradition were thus complex and dynamic processes within ever changing fields of colonial conquest, rule and exploitation” (Spear 2003, 4-5).

Accordingly, while this perspective does not deny the existence of elements of social change in the dialectics of human development, it simply assumes that colonial experience was a mere episode - the impact of which does not ‘tame, discipline and order’ society in an explicit and predictable manner (Ekeh 1980). As such these episodic changes do not create sharp and perceptible demarcation between the past and the future and while it persists it may not be immediately felt or recognized. Since, for example, ‘colonial authorities [were believed to have

merely] sought to incorporate pre-existing polities...into colonial structures', not much cataclysm was needed to enforce that and in the process colonialism changed very little of the institutional and cultural artefacts of the natives in pursuance of its objectives. This, for example, has been the underlying perception in the prosecution of colonial administration where the argument has been that the colonialists used extant pre-colonial traditional institutions to reorder the colonial landscape. Hence, colonialism did not craft anew the various institutions and identities that took center stage in the political space since it only 'redrew' or 'repackaged' extant institutions and identities in the light of colonial demands (Ekeh 1990, Ranger 1993).

Here the point of departure is that if Africa and its constitutive elements were severely affected by European intrusion, it does not only suffice to say that the colonial situation had *denaturalized* the pre-colonial fluid and permeable African authenticity and processes (Zeleva 2006) but it generated social structures whose survival was guaranteed only by the colonial situation that propped them up and serviced colonial desires in a more treacherous and destabilizing manner (Welsh 1996; Ekeh 1980; Robinson 1961; Robb 1997; Ekeh 1990, James and Laitin 2000; Willis 1992). The colonial experience occasioned unsettling currents that uprooted authentic social order for the African and let loose confusing conditions for the society and its future direction. This transformed the new social order into sharply fragmented 'fault lines' that became magnified as colonialism progressed. Viewed through this prism then colonialism was a process of epochal dimension that intensely shake up extant social structures through the introduction of more permanent social forms and process whose effect permeate the society. Here, epochs are thought of as events capable of shaping and molding human conduct and behavior to such an extent that those actions and thoughts find their full meaning only within their confines amid enduring consequences long afterwards (Ekeh 1980). In this sense colonialism was an unparalleled force of change that met the native, institutions, and socio-cultural artefacts defenseless from its relentless onslaught. Hence, in the process of reordering 'whatever colonialism [touched] it must have distorted and debased' (Robb 1997, 247).

In the specific case of the *Stateless* societies of Northern Nigeria, the following points could be made: by 'redesigning' pre-colonial socio-political processes and institutions colonialism ended up altering the direction of history, impacting the constitutive elements therein and laying the basis for the sprouting of rigid dividing walls around different cultural clusters thereby inventing highly inflexible identities for groups. However, it is here conceded that the cultural identities generated became potentially more extensive, expansive and inclusive *fiction* than the displaced small scale pre-colonial loyalties. But, by deliberately preventing some communities from intensive missionary activities and allowing others to be profoundly affected by it colonialism simultaneously calcified the communities' walls of differences by neutralizing the prospect of the integrative effect that might have ensued. Thus, 'transforming [pre-colonial] flexible custom into hard prescription' (Ranger 1984, 212). Curiously, Europeans have largely portrayed societies like this as essentially the 'locus of permanent and ... irreducible tribal hatreds' (David 2002). But more profound is the fact that colonialism hardly levelled down the space for the various cultural groups to operate as a hierarchy of some sort emerged among their competing elites (Zeleva 2006; Mamdani 1994). Since the colonial situation generated the emergence of relatively larger cultural clusters, it actually *fictionalized* an identity for those groups into existence (Ekeh 1975; Ranger 1984). This is more glaring in the colonial administration of the *Stateless* societies of the defunct Zaria Province in northern Nigeria. Here British administrative policy fragmented the political

space along cultural enclosures that it administratively referred to as districts. As time went by this propped up a *Southern Zaria* identity around which the heterogeneous small scale groups rallied - including groups which, were administratively speaking, never a part of *Southern Zaria*. Understanding the principles of indirect rule as a response to the challenges that confronted the British is a helpful starting point.

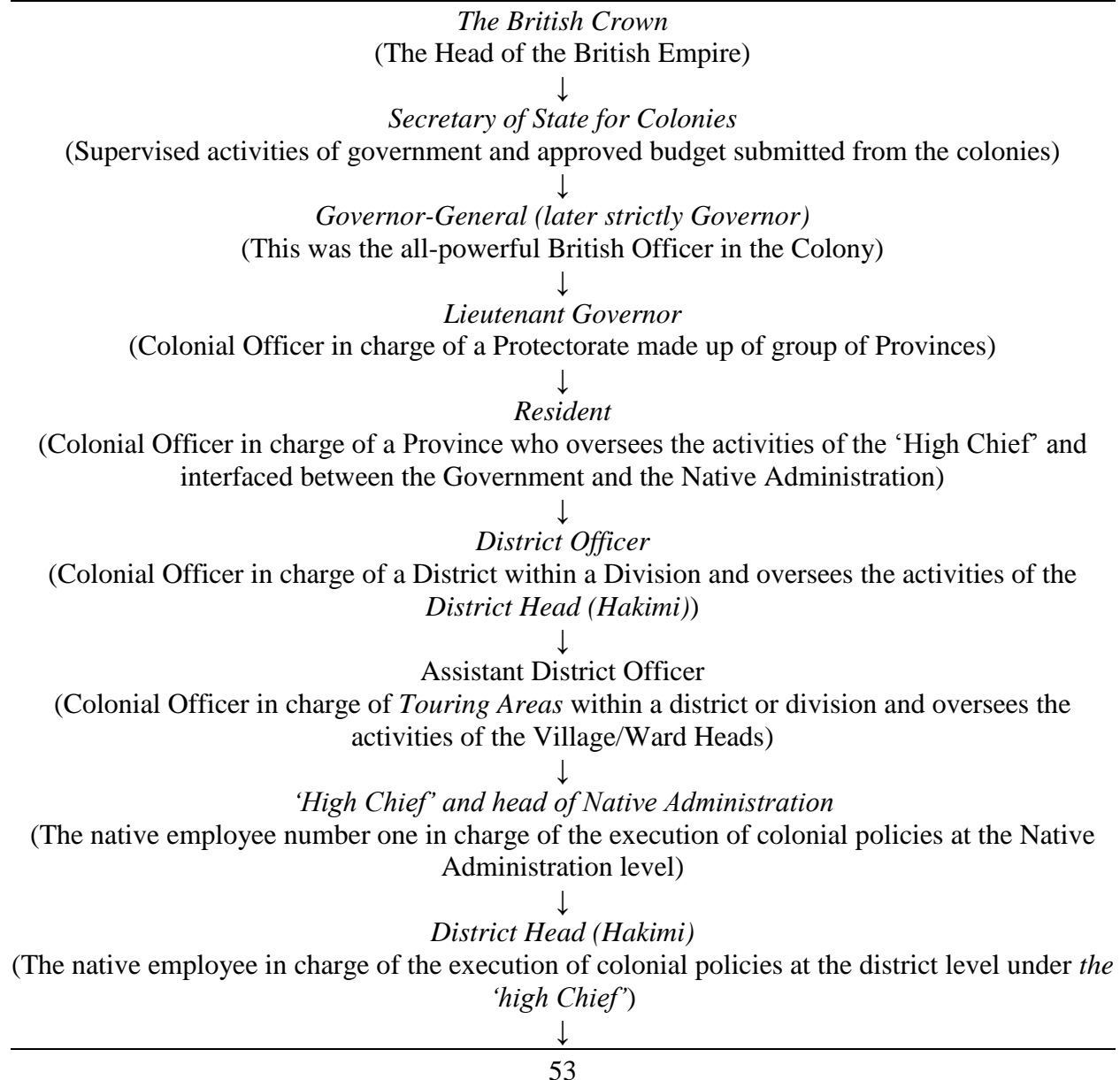
### **The Principle of Indirect Rule in British Colonies**

Indirect Rule as a British concept of local administration rested on the search for, identification of, or the fabrication of a native agency and a reliable agent that could give colonialism a 'good blast' in its attempt at establishing law and order and the collection of tax. Such an agent must, essentially, be willing to assume a subordinate status and demonstrates unquestionable loyalty to the British. Consequently, after swearing an oath of allegiance to "well and truly serve his Majesty and his representative the High Commissioner, to cherish no treachery and disloyalty ..., to obey the laws of the protectorate...and the lawful commands of the High Commissioner and his Residents" this agent was issued a Warrant of Appointment (Sa'ad 1984, 452). Here authority was derived not from any traditional or pre-colonial source, but purely from the British whose rule was based principally on conquest (Usman 2006, 49). This is in spite of the facade of appointing agents from a class of native aristocrats in places where such classes were available. Where a reliable agent could be found, administrative responsibilities, together with the requisite coercive instruments of state, were entrusted in it to administer, and often, adjudicate matters according to the dictates of local customs that were not 'repugnant to humanity' (Tosh 1973, 479). Where an agent of the caliber required could not be found the tacit instruction was that one must be invented and vested with the needed power or such an area be brought under the control of a nearby 'competent' agent. In *Stateless* societies where authority structures were not immediately visible Lord Lugard, the principal architect of the system, instructed that 'the first step is to endeavor to find a man of influence as a chief, and to group under him as many villages or districts as possible, to teach him to delegate powers and to take an interest in his Native Treasury, to support his authority and to inculcate a sense of responsibility' (Kirk-Green 1965, 46). In essence the Lugardian enduring dictum was to either *find the chief or make the chief* that is "capable of taking certain decisions and implementing them without reference to the central colonial government... and either using the same or another native agency for the purpose of dispensing justice..." (Ikime 1968, 434; Heussler 1968).

In the attempt to find, create or establish a reliable agent such an agent needed not to be indigenous to the area, the ethnic group or the clan over which the agent was meant to oversee since British obsession was with a 'competent' agent that could effectively operate the administrative structure and not necessarily a search for an indigenous or traditional character. This truism was widespread in other British protectorates, the *Stateless* societies of Northern Nigerian and among some 'pagan' groups even at the clan level (Tosh 1973; Ogot 1963; Fallers 1965; Barua 1995; Barnes 1960; Kenyatta 1965; Odinga 1967; Magid 1968; Tete 1974; O'Kwu 1976; Ibrahim 2007). In furtherance of colonial objectives, even the status of so-called extant 'traditional ruler', where such was assumed to have been found, eventually lost its *traditionalness* in the service of colonialism as the very sacred bonds that might have existed between the Chief and his community were destroyed (Tibenderana 1987). In the first instance this 'traditional ruler' was freed from hitherto societal moral restraints that defined and diluted his powers, and now

derived authority from the British enacted Native Authority Ordinances of 1907, 1910, 1916 and 1933 (Cameron 1937, 12-13). Thus, the ‘traditional ruler’ stopped being the “embodiment of the tribe, the head and center of its fabric” or its “sacred authority” as the appointment, recognition and deposition of a chief are largely determined by the judgment of the Supreme Authority (Tshekedi 1936). Indeed, it is not surprising that throughout the colonial landscape Lugard never referred to this agency as traditional but rather as a ‘native ruler’ (Ikime 1968). In this respect beyond the myth fabricated by the British indirect rule was purely a British administrative design that emerged during colonial conquest and replaced or smashed the pre-colonial phase that might have been traditional (Tibenderana 1987). Figure 1 shows the structural arrangement of the colonial edifice and the place of the native agents in the scheme of things:

**Figure 1: Structure of British Administrative Scheme in Nigeria**



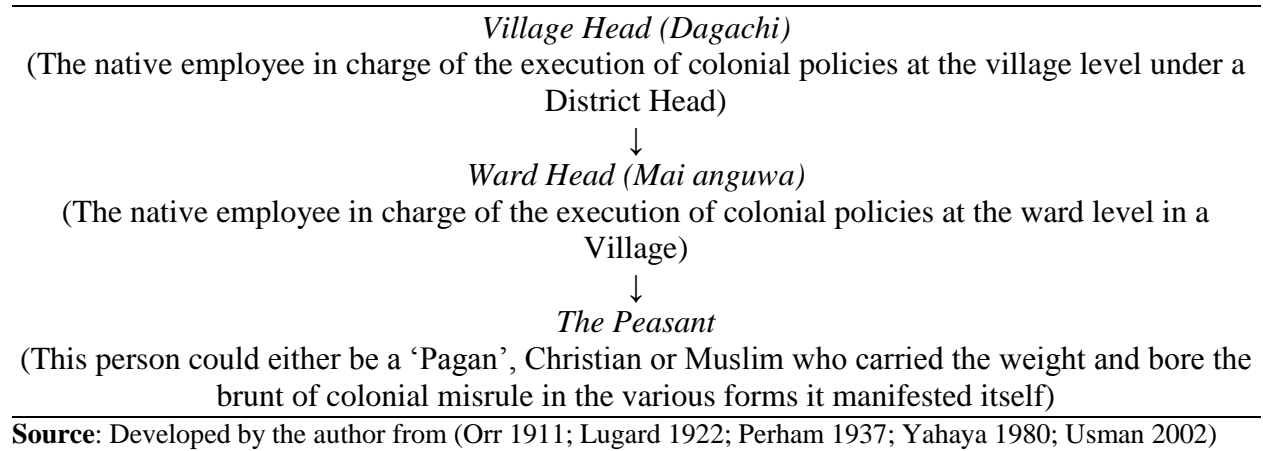


Figure 1 indicates that the bureaucratic segment down to the Assistant District Officer's level was racialized but religiously homogenous in the 'white sense', i.e., strictly composed of white officers who shared in common religious belief although denominations may differ. Similarly, the Native Administration (N.A.) that colonialism created was also racialized but ethnically and religiously heterogeneous in the 'black sense', i.e., composed of natives but the administrative structure became 'tribalized' in favor of native agents of different ethnic groups at various levels whose ethnic identities became linked with different religion. Thus in a context where a native agent is entrusted with the powers to adjudicate, prosecute, regulate and extract revenue from other natives, among other things, colonial administration actually ended up entrenching the fibers of political despotism and a condition for the nurturing of ethnic and religious cleavages in the native spaces. What Figure 1 further reveals is that although the 'high chief' was the head of the N.A. that did not mean that he was unsupervised. Supervision strategy first entailed the sub-division of the Province into a number of Districts within Divisions and appointing British Resident, District Officers and Assistants District Officers to oversee the conducts of the native employees at specific levels (Yahaya 1980). This offered them the possibilities of supervising, and indeed, intervening on issues, for even in the customary courts they sat and observed proceedings and overturned decisions where they interpreted such decisions to be 'repugnant to humanity'.

This meant that the 'white' racialized sector directly controlled the 'black' racialized sector to an extent that made it practically impossible to have two independent colonial administrative sectors standing side by side. This is so because any agent found in the native sector was a mere colonial employee who could have been sacked at any time regardless of his *invented* local standing. Thus, the argument of 'internal colonialism', 'double colonialism' 'native colonialism' or 'colonialism within colonialism', suggesting that *Stateless* societies simultaneously experienced two separate forms of colonialism, the one British and the other local non-indigenous to those societies (Yohanna 1993; Ochonu 2008) is unsustainable. Lugard made it clear that "the native Chiefs (agents) are constituted as an integral part of the machinery of the administration: [and that] there are no two sets of rulers - British and Natives – working either separately or in co-operation, but a single government in which the native Chiefs have well defined duties..." (Lugard 1922, 198). How did this operate in the *Stateless* societies of Zaria Province? And what have been the consequences of the colonial administrative designs on these societies?

### British Administrative Schemes in Zaria Province

British occupation of northern part of the Nigeria was faced by the challenges of administering a vast and complex possession whose extent and extant administrative systems the British were yet to effectively occupy and fully comprehend respectively (Ballard 1972; Robinson and Gallagher 1961). This also came against the backdrop of inadequate number of British personnel to contemplate direct form of administration. For example, it was reported that in the mid-fifties, the British Administrative Service numbered only 230 men, this number itself being considerably below the figure during the inter-war years. This was a period when the estimated population of the North would have been above the 11.5 million that the Region was put at in 1931 (Heussler 1968, 98). To ease the challenges of administering the region the British divided the area into large Provinces which were further sub-divided into districts. Thus, Zaria Province was initially sub-divided into 32 districts. However, general administrative changes and transfers affected this number but as at 1920, 27 administrative districts were maintained. The names of the districts and the titles of British native administrative agents, i.e., District Heads, are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1: The Administrative Districts in Zaria Province as at 1920**

Northern Districts	District Heads	Southern Districts	District Heads
Anchau	Dallatu	Bishini	Sarkin Zana
Auchang	Magajin Gari	Chawai	Sarkin Chawai
Giwa	Fagachi	Jere	Sarkin Jere
Igabi	Turaki Babba	Kachia	Ma'aji
Ikara	Sarkin Yaki	Kagarko	Sarkin Kagarko
Jaji	Wambai	Katab	Katuka
Kudan	Sarkin Fada	Kajuru	Sarkin Kajuru
Makarfi	Galadima	Kauru	Sarkin Kauru
Makera	Magaji Jisambo	Kudaru	Turaki Karami
Panhauya	Madauchi	Kujama	Woinya
Sabon Birni	Makama Babba	Lere	Wali
Soba	Makama Karami	Bikaratu	Dan Galadima
Turunku	Sarkin Ruwa		
Zangon Aya	Dan Madami		
Kan Giwa	Iyan Gari		

**Source:** (Kirk-Green 1965, 7-8)

Table 1 indicates that there were fifteen and twelve districts created in the northern and southern parts of Zaria Province respectively. Ethnically speaking the northern group of districts was predominantly Hausa and Fulani while the southern group of districts was predominantly heterogeneous ethnic groups of varied sizes with similarities and regularities in cultural practices. However, in the southern group of districts one frequently finds settlements of Hausa and Fulani some of which were as old in settling as the arrival of some of the 'indigenous' groups into the area (Tete 1974; Bala 2004; Smith 1970). Zaria Province was sub-divided into administrative

*Touring Areas* under the supervision of a British District Officer and his Assistant (Yahaya 1980). From the Resident down to the District Officer and Assistant District Officers, theoretically, they were supposed to play an advisory role and using persuasion in their dealings with the native administrators. In practice, however, the native administrators had little or no choice but to heed the advice issued or faced the prospect of reprisal. Thus, the attempt at establishing 'law and order' in these districts simply reveals the standard creative administrative disposition of the British in its conquered territories.

### **The First Phase of Administrative Reforms**

In inventing administrative districts, the British were mainly preoccupied with equating districts with ethnic boundaries which ended up creating ethnic clusters. However, the ethnic clusters so created did not neatly correspond with individual ethnic groups rather it became a cluster of related heterogeneous groups. In sourcing for an agent to administer the districts the principles of established jurisdiction, administrative convenience and, most importantly, effective performance became the major considerations (Prescott 1961; Akinyele 1990). Given the inadequacy of personnel and not wanting 'to pull down the structure about [their] ears before [they had] a better edifice ready to take its place' (Ballard 1972, 3) the British sought to administer the area through three broad but related administrative policies of centralizing power around an effective native agent. Subsequently the following administrative designs emerged:

- (a) The administration of Muslim Hausa and Fulani peasants through a Muslim Hausa and Fulani district head with the aid of Muslim Hausa and Fulani Village and Ward Heads as was the case in the northern districts of Zaria Province and some parts of its southern districts where Hausa 'settler' communities were found;
- (b) The administration of 'Pagan' peasants, often through a Muslim Hausa and Fulani district head with the aid of 'Pagan' village and ward heads as was the case in those 'Pagan' areas of southern districts of Zaria and Jema'a N.A.(s); and
- (c) The administration of 'Pagan' peasants infrequently through 'Pagan' district head with the aid of 'Pagan' village and ward heads. In the main, especially before the 1930s, this was more of an aberration to the standard British scheme as most of the groups found themselves under Muslim Hausa and Fulani district heads. However, this administration of 'Pagan' peasants through 'Pagan' district head is sub-divided into two;
  - (i) A 'Pagan' district head whose 'traditional authority' historically hardly went beyond his clan but whose newly acquired 'authority' was extended to control all or most of the clans that comprised his ethnic group. This was the case in Jaba (Kwoi) independent district where certain wards and clans of Jaba extraction were forcefully brought under the control of the Pop Ham (Zaria Province File-C.35 6/7/1952). Initially Jaba (Kwoi) was within Jema'a emirate and later within Jema'a division in Nassarawa/Plateau Province before its transfer back to Zaria Province in 1934; and
  - (ii) A 'Pagan' district head without any traditional claim to 'authority' over his entire ethnic groups but whose power is extended to cover other different ethnic groups. Examples are the cases of Kagoro and Moroa (Asholio) independent districts (Tete 1974; Bonat 1992). In Moroa district, for example, the British created 'warrant chief' had the entire Asholio, Takkad and some Atyab (Katab) groups, among



others, in his possession. In fact, Bonat posits that when the district was created “Kura Sikiyi, ‘chief’ of Kaura”, turned down an offer by the British to become the native agent of a combined Moroa district, stating that “his people had never ruled their neighbors” before the coming of the British (Bonat 1992, 11).

On the whole these administrative schemes were established at a period when the British were preoccupied with establishing ‘law and order’ especially coming after the chaos generated by their carnage of conquest. To add to that was the Eurocentric perception that saw the natives as ‘savages’, ‘uncivilized’, ‘backward’ and ‘unsettled’ who needed to be refined. Thus, discontents were translated to mean ‘savagery’ or ‘barbaric behavior’ and were crushed by the combined forces of British military fire power and expedient administrative structures (Toure 1991). But up to the 1930s these administrative schemes persisted until some noticeable changes were introduced.

### ***The Second Phase of Administrative Reforms***

From the 1930’s colonial administrators with different conception of how administrative structure should be organized ethnically rather than territorially had gained solid hold of the top echelon of colonial administration. For example, by 1933, Browne, a Resident with substantial experience in ‘Pagan’ areas and long standing disagreement with placing ‘Pagans’ under Emirate rule, was appointed Chief Commissioner (formerly Lieutenant Governor) of Northern Provinces. At the same time, Clarke, who had served in the most difficult parts of the ‘Pagan’ Provinces of Nassarawa and Plateau was appointed Personal Assistant to the Secretary - Political (P.A.S./ Political) in the Nigerian Secretariat, becoming Governor Cameron’s Chief Adviser on Native Administration (Ballard 1972, 12). Arising from this change in British administrative echelon the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, for example, saw the reorganization of divisional/district administrative units in some parts of the *Stateless* societies of Northern Nigerian area (Agi 2004). But how did the developments affect the ‘southern districts’ of Zaria N.A. and *Southern Zaria* in general?

At the district level the administrative reforms of the 1930s did not affect the ‘Southern Districts’ as Muslim Hausa and Fulani District Heads were maintained. However, at the clan/ward level there were administrative reorganizations through the creation of Village Councils constituted along the village units, made up of ethnically related group of clans/wards (Ibrahim 2007, 60). For example, in Zango Katab District in September 1932, the then District Head, Katuka Malam Ja’afaru Dan Isiyaku, in line with the general British reforms of the 1930s, reorganized the Ward administrative structure into Village Councils. Prior to this reform the numerous clans/wards were administered separately as some self-contained units irrespective of the fact that some of them were actually either clans or sub-clans of the same ethnic group or closely related ethnic groups. This, according to Usman (2002), appeared to be time consuming and administratively challenging as the various clan/ward Heads had to deal directly with the District Head. Kato (1974) indicates that the “‘Autonomy’ of each head ... [had] several disadvantages [one of which is that] it was difficult to have mutual cooperation... [among clan/ward heads] when they were completely independent of each other... [Consequently] to break these self-contained units [the various clans/wards had to be regrouped] to form [fewer] administrative units” (Kato 1974, 102). Table 2 shows an example of the reorganized Village Councils in Zangon Katab District.

**Table 2: Reorganized Village Administrative Units in Zangon Katab District As At 1933**

<b>Village Councils</b>	<b>Number of Villages cum Wards</b>	<b>Ethnic Groups</b>
Zangon	Zarkwai/Sako/Bakin Kogi I	Katab
Zaman Dabo	Kurmin Masara/ Kabori/ Zaman Awon	Katab
Taligan	Magamiya I/Magamiya II/Gidan Wuka	Katab
Gora	Kurmin Gandu	Katab
Anguwar	Mabushi I/Mabushi II/Kurmin Dawaki/Gidan	Katab
Gayya	Kare/Fada Tsohuwa	
Jankasa	Magada Kura	Katab
Gidan Zaki	Bakin Kogi II/ Kwakwu/ Kigudu	Katab
Fadan Kaje	Wandon/ Churyam/ Tsohon Gida/ Ramfa	Kaje
Zonkwa	Kurmin Bi/ Madauchi/ Magazawa/ Abobo	Kaje
Zuturun Fada	Zuturum Fama/ Zuturum Mago/ Kangurara	Kaje
Fadiyan	Fadiyan Mugu/ Fadiyan Yazanu/Fadiyan Abursan/	Kaje
Mugu	Zangon Gajere	
Gidan Jatau	Ifan/Anguwan Jatau	Kaje
Kachachare	Kachachare	Kachachare/ Hausa
Fadan	Kangun/Kaban/Lona/Tabiriarna/Zaku/Kagal/ Yagal/	Kamantan/Hausa
Kamantan	Balo/ Tabiri Hausawa	
Kamaru	Anza/Katul/Fansil/Hausawan Fansil/Hausawan Tasha	Ikulu/ Hausa
Fadan Ikulu	Bato/Lisuru	Ikulu
Auchuna	Gidan Ali/Yado/Gidan Gimba/Anchar/Kwarjin	Ikulu
Zangon Katab	Yalwa	Hausa

**Source:** (Usman 2002, 197-98)

Table 2 indicates that inspite of attempt at equating districts with ethnic boundaries Zangon Katab District remained ethnically heterogeneous and composed of five different ‘indigenous’ groups and a Hausa ‘settler’ group. Administratively there were fifty eight villages cum wards in the District with an almost overwhelming presence of Katab (Atyab), Kaje (Bajju) and Ikulu while the Kamantan, Kachecere and Hausa groups almost had a village or a ward each. In actual fact these villages or wards were more like a lineage or a couple of related lineages of the specific ethnic groups. In this respect a Village or Ward Head might simply be a lineage head. Administratively speaking this meant that prior to the 1930s reform there were fifty eight ‘autonomous’ Ward Heads that the District Head (*Hakimi*) had to deal with directly. To solve this quagmire the administrative wards were reconstituted into eighteen Village Councils with a Head (*dagaci*) each. For example, the Atyab (Katab) with eighteen Ward Heads now have seven Village Units and Heads; the Bajju (Kaje) with fifteen Ward Heads now have five Village Councils and Heads (*dagaci*); the Ikulu with twelve Wards now have three Village Councils and Heads (*dagaci*); the Kamantan with nine Wards now have one Village Council and Head (*dagaci*); Kacechere and Hausa Wards were upgraded to a Village Council each. Thus, the *dagaci* of each Village Council now interfaced between the *Hakimi* and *Masu anguwa*. Each of the *dagatai* was appointed by the

*Hakimi* in consultation with the village elders while the *dagaci* in turn appoints a Personal Assistant (*Wakili*) and a *Mai anguwa* who together served as his *ears* in their various communities (Kato 1974; Usman 2002).

This administrative reform, which would continue in the later part of colonial rule, was a very radical departure from the normal ways of the people – who were used to their small-scale egalitarian social order at the clan level. Prior to this administrative reorganization not much substantive political power was exercised by the *Magagin dodo* (Chief Priest) who was, spiritually, the most outstanding man of influence in the society. According to Yahaya (1980) authority was based on the clan above which no one exercised it. At most the *Magagin dodo* exercised only social and moral authority over a clan (Yahaya 1980, 16). The practical implication of this administrative reform is that from the ward to the village level the base of ‘power’ was strengthened and expanded, for the first time, beyond the clan unit and the creation of a Village Council with a Head. This now effectively undermined any traditional arrangement that might have existed as the new Village Head becomes an ‘alien’ colonially inspired sole authority of some sort. Consequently, clans previously not under his control were, for the first time, annexed for him.

Evidence, thus far, suggests that while at the ward/village level of ‘Southern Districts’ there were administrative reorganizations the Lugardian model persistent at the District level because “it became clear that (only) (Zaria) emirate Native Treasury offered the best available source of fund for development (in ‘Southern Districts’) ... while central government funds were reduced to a minimum by the world economic recession” (Ballard 1972, 12; Robinson and Gallagher 1961). A number of administrative transfers occurred in *Southern Zaria* which raised some critical issues.

### **The Transfers of Independent Districts and a Section of Bajju Back to Zaria Province**

In a letter dated October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1934, Governor Donald Cameron sought the permission of the Secretary of State for Colonies to return the Moroa, Jaba and Kagoro *Independent Districts* and a section of the Kaje then placed in Plateau Province back to Zaria Province with effect from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1934. Arguing that this transfer would have the effect of uniting two sections of one tribe, the Jaba (Kwoi), of which one section was in Kachia District of Zaria Province. Furthermore, the Kaje will also be united to a branch of the same tribe in the Zangon Katab District of Zaria Province. Cameron added that the Kagoro and Moroa are ethnically more related to tribes in Zaria Province than those in Plateau Province (Northen-(Nigeria)-Provinces-Secretariat-Book-File 1934, 142). First, starting with the Kaje [clans] of Banewa, Bata and part of Bainbin (Kato 1974, 94) and subsequently Jaba (Kwoi), Moroa and Kagoro *Independent Districts* were transferred to Zaria Province in 1934. These transfers raised three important administrative issues:

- (i) This transfer meant that the entire Kaje (Bajju) would now be under Zaria N.A. since they are now united with their kith and kin in Zangon Katab District therefore adding to the list of ‘Pagans’ under the control of an ‘alien’ District Head. However, the transfer of the Bajju in the same administrative unit provides the ground for the claim towards ‘tribal’ leadership of the entire Bajju by emerging ‘indigenous’ elites like Usman Sokop. Eventually, their discontent would develop around the demand for a separate N.A. from Zaria. This subsequently sparked up similar demands from other ethnic groups like the Katab (Atyab), Chawai, among others, in the area. Furthermore, while the collective discontents were against an ‘alien’ District Head, the heterogeneity of the district would also trigger dormant disagreements among the ethnic groups in the area.

- (ii) With respect to the Jaba, while those from Jaba (Kwoi) Independent District, now chiefdom, have been transferred to Zaria Province and maintained their independent status, a section of them in Kachia district was not brought under the Pop Ham (Chief of Jaba). Consequently, a contradiction immediately emerged, for while in moment of frustration against colonial domination through ‘alien’ District Heads, the Jaba in Kachia district imagined their kith and kin in Jaba chiefdom as being free from what they perceived to be misrule and oppression those in the chiefdom would continue to see their brothers in Zaria N.A. as better off (Zaria Province File-C.35 1952; Daniel 1954).
- (iii) Both individually and collectively even though now Jaba, Moroa and Kagoro Chiefdoms maintained their administrative independence from Zaria N.A. but as a matter of expedience, stemming from their weak fiscal status, their treasuries became subordinated to Zaria N.A. (Tete 1974). Furthermore, since the headquarters of Zaria Province was located a few kilometers outside Zaria town, the Resident of the Province as well as the District Officer of their division resided in Zaria. This condition was interpreted as an inseparable part of Zaria N.A. hold on them. This laid the ground for their alliance in resentment with groups placed under the administration of Zaria N.A. and provided the atmosphere for the materialization of a *Southern Zaria* identity. This situation was compounded by the fact that their scribes were at the beginning of the 1930’s still posted from Zaria even though in the employ of the Provincial administration. These scribes were Hausas who were then mostly the ones ‘literate’ enough in the language of administration in the Province, i.e., Hausa language.

In a colonial context, such as this, entailing the stationing of an agent, whether ‘alien’ or ‘indigenous’, and entrusting such agent with powers to exact taxes, adjudicate cases and maintain law and order, especially in the absence of a guiding traditional model, authoritarian behavior is inevitable (Zaria Province File-C.35 1943; Barnes 1960). This “often turns... [administration] into warfare, thereby infecting leaders with a siege mentality and effectively relegating development issues to very low priorities. [This]...disconnects [leaders] from their people and completely dissociates public policy from social needs; and constant coercion of the people alienates them from the state...seen as a force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit” (Ake 1996, 2). Examples of this abound in *Southern Zaria*, particularly in the *Independent Districts*. The infamous case of Madaki Ibrahim in Jaba (Kwoi) who privatized, personalized and perverted state institutions for non-altruistic needs and dispensed ‘justice’ to the highest bidder while taking delight in harassing people was one (Daniel 1954). Another was the case of Chief Mugunta in Kagoro chiefdom whose reign ushered in political repression of unimaginable type. His callousness in prosecuting personal and colonial interests transformed him into an agent that was dreaded and systematically avoided by the people in the District. His high handedness was so horrendous that even the British had to remove him from office (Tete 1974). The combustible colonial administrative schemes in *Southern Zaria* got complicated with the arrival of Christian missionaries and the emergence of ‘tribal elites’.

### **Christian Mission in Southern Zaria**

As British colonial officers were busy establishing ‘law and order’ and convenient administrative structures in the area, Christian missionary elements had already appeared in *Southern Zaria*, particularly the Independent Districts, around 1910 (Kantiok 1975; Kato 1974;

Samuel 1975; Turaki 1982; Lenge 1976; Tawai 1978). British administrators and favorable environment seemed to have encouraged the missionaries to intensify their efforts of 'soul saving' and 'change agents'. The missionary purportedly came with the single mission of proselytizing the natives and considered extant traditional religion, and Islam, with disdain. Islam received more bashing by the missionaries as it was thought to be "utterly anti-Christian, and really blasphemous in its interpretation of the character of God, setting Him forth as guilty of such abominable cruelty as even an ordinary decent man, with all his sinfulness, would regard with horror (Mangvwat 1984, 135).

Consequently, with favorable British mind set, the missionaries expanded the scope of their activities to include the provisions of basic health and elementary education. Thus they started providing mission education in the *Independent Districts* of Moroa, Kagoro and Jaba (Kwoi). An important fall out of this is the emergence of and mission training of what Umar (1974) refers to as 'tribal elites' who were brought up with memories of hostile relationship with the Muslim Hausa and Fulani Emirates of Zaria and Jema'a. For these 'tribal elites' growing up within the missionary enterprise discouraged them from joining what they perceived to be backward, oppressive and non-Western Muslim Hausa and Fulani N.A. (Tete 1974). This disdain for the N.A. and refusal to join it, especially at levels lower than Assistant District Head or within the bureaucratic segment of the N.A., is clearly brought out by the categories and number of *Southern Zaria* people in Zaria N.A. in Table 3.

**Table 3: Zaria Native Authority Appointments by Ethnic Group in *Southern Zaria* as at 1956**

Position	Hausa and Fulani			'Indigenes ethnic groups'		
	Zangon Katab	Kachia	Kagark o	Zangon Katab	Kachi a	Kagarko
District Heads	1	1	1	-	-	-
District Scribes	3	2	2	-	-	-
Messengers	6	3	3	-	-	-
Assistant District Heads	-	-	-	5	3	1
Village Heads	7	3	5	66	28	27
Village Scribes	7	4	11	25	9	10
Alkali/Mufti	3	2	2	-	-	-
Court Scribes	1	1	1	-	-	-
Court Members	-	-	-	1	4	3
Yan Doka (Police)	5	2	2	3	-	1
Yari (Prison Guards)	1	1	1	-	-	-
Veterinary	3	1	1	-	-	-
Department						
Agricultural	3	1	2	-	-	-
Department						
Health Department	1	-	1	-	-	-
Cotton	2	2	1	-	-	-
Health Education	1	1	1	-	-	-
Forestry Department	6	2	2	1	3	-
Supervisors	2	-	-	-	-	-
Road Overseers	2	1	-	-	-	-
Teachers	2	1	3	9	7	-

**Source:** (Zaria Province File-C.35 6/7/1952, Ibrahim 2007, 60-61)

Table 3 indicates that as at 1956, although 'tribal elites' had long emerged as a political force in *Southern Zaria* (Lenge 1976; Tawai 1978; Turaki 1982), very few showed willingness to work with the N.A. They found places in the missionary enterprise and consequently became champions of their societies and 'inherited' a feeling of resentment for the Muslim Hausa and Fulani Emirate and associated communities, believing that their area was deliberately neglected by the N.A. while it privileged the Muslim Hausa and Fulani groups. A further consequence of the combination of the administrative structure and the activities of Christian missionaries was the creation of a close association between Christianity and the ethnic identities of *Southern Zaria* people in opposition to the Muslim Hausa and Fulani. This development in no small measure helped sow the seed of future discords that assumed religious character in the relations of the two groups (Willink 1958). However, in spite of that the complex administrative scheme endured in the face of rising discontents against it. What were those discontents and how did they define the struggles of the people in the area?

In practical terms colonialism, and particularly its appearance in the form of Indirect Rule at the district level, translates into what the people of *Southern Zaria* saw as their forceful and

total subjugation and subordination to local ‘alien rule’ (Yohanna 1993; Ibrahim 2007). To them this came with total disregard and humiliation to their culture, customs, traditional institutions, pre-colonial political organizations and served as major drawback to their progress as a people and has undergirded endless crises in the area (Lekwot 2009; Duniya 2009). A major fall out of this is the development of a *Southern Zaria* identity which socio-culturally signified groups of people who had been forcefully brought under the socio-cultural and religious control of Hausa and Fulani Muslims even though they remained ‘Pagans’ and later Christians. Administratively, the *Southern Zaria* identity referred to groups of people who were located mainly in the southern part of Zaria N.A. with ‘alien’ District Heads and who felt excluded from participation in the administration of their lives at the district level.

As time went by this ingrained feeling provided the fulcrum around which the discontents of *Southern Zaria* people became amplified. In this context a noticeable pattern emerged as their struggles sequentially graduated from the initial desire for the indigenization of all District Heads followed by the desire for the creation of separate Districts from ‘indigenous’ District Heads appointed from Zaria to the agitations for the creation of independent Chiefdoms and Chiefs for their various ethnic groups (Ibrahim 2007). Based on the widespread desire for an indigenous District Head even the political association that was formed in the 1950s in the area, i.e., the Middle Zone League, had the cause of the indigenization of all district head appointments in *Southern Zaria* and the appointment of a Second Class Chief for the area as part of its cardinal principles (Yahaya 1980, 63). A catalogue of discontents necessitated reforms aimed at devolving some administrative responsibilities at the Village level in the mid-1950s were initiated. The previous Village Councils (VC) were dissolved and starting from 1956 Village Group Councils (VGC) (*Yankuna*) were established. Consequently, the previous VC composed of clans, sub-clans or lineages were regrouped to incorporate distinct ethnic groups of those clans, sub-clans or lineages in forming the VGC (Ibrahim 2007, 57). Each VGC (*Yanki*) had a President (*Wakili*) that was upgraded to the rank of an Assistant District Head. In this respect ten VGCs were demarcated out of the four Districts in *Southern Zaria*. These are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Village Group Councils in the Four Southern Districts of Zaria N.A. as at 1956**

Z/Kataf District	Kachia District	Kagarko District	Kauru District
Katab (Atyab) VGC	Jaba VGC	Koro VGC	Kurama VGC
Kaje (Bajju) VGC	Kuturmi VGC		
Ikulu VGC	Kadara VGC		
Kamantan VGC			
Chawai (Tsam) VGC			

**Source:** (Ibrahim 2007, 60-61)

Table 4 shows the four districts of *Southern Zaria* and their VGCs. Taking Zangon Katab District as a typical example, the Kataf (Atyab), Kaje (Bajju), Ikulu and Kamantan VGCs are in actual fact a regrouping of the defunct VCs shown in Table 2 into VGCs. The Hausa of Zango town were now directly under the District Head of Zangon Katab with head quarter in Zango town. The Chawai (Tsam) were moved into Zangon Katab district in the late 1930s. The reforms that produced

VGC and Assistant District Head (*Wakili*) were, at that time, thought to be major advance in responding to some of the discontents of the ‘indigenous’ people (Yahaya 1980; Usman 2002). However, Ibrahim (2007) contends that the qualification to the post of *Wakili* (President) of the VGC served to exclude the politically restive mission educated elites of the area as only the extant Village Heads (*dagatai*) were qualified for such appointments. This requirement for the *Wakilship* was thought of as better built on the experience acquired by extant *dagatai* in administration rather than on inexperienced elites (Usman 2002). Thus, this group of aggrieved elites intensified their effort for an indigenous District Head as they saw the exclusionary measure as attempt at deflecting the trajectory of their agitations by Zaria N.A. through the appointment of pliable elements (Toure 1991).

Be that as it may by now it had already become obvious to most of the elites from *Southern Zaria* that peaceful demand was increasingly becoming a fruitless exercise and thus violent revolts as the most potent strategy for ‘liberation’ started gaining ground (Kaduna State Government 1987). In spite of this, however, at the District level the administrative scheme endured throughout colonial period and up to 1967 when Bala Ade Dauke Gora, was appointed as the first Christian indigenous District Head of Zangon Katab after John Sarki Tafida was rejected (Willink 1958; Irekefi 1976; Ibrahim 2007). Although a Christian, *Southern Zaria* elites considered John Sarki Tafida not representative enough because he was a Fulani with roots in the Zaria N.A. (Yahaya 1980). Bala Ade Dauke Gora’s appointment had enduring consequences in *Southern Zaria* and the politics of Kaduna state. Some of these consequences are:

- i. The appointment bolstered the spirit of the ‘indigenous’ groups as it signified a path breaking triumph in the struggles against Hausa and Fulani ‘alien’ District Head and laid the ground for the acquisition of what Toure (2001) refers to as ‘victor’s mentality’ while on the part of the Hausa and Fulani ‘settler’ community Bala’s appointment indicated a threat, loss of power and lack of fair hearing. Presently this inclination is reproduced in the narrative of ‘indigeneity’ in the context of the struggles for scarce but desirable resources. In this regard the ‘settler’ communities tend to be excluded in the definition of ‘indigeneity’ and associated rights and privileges by elites from *Southern Zaria* while groups from the ‘settler’ communities on their part insists on inclusion in the definition of ‘indigeneity’. For the *Southern Zaria* elites this exclusionary drive is in order to avoid what Bakut (2009) refers to as ‘double loss’ to the Hausa and Fulani who could get such valuables from other sections of Kaduna state and yet attempt to claim same from *Southern Zaria* at the expense of the ‘indigenous’ people. In a significant way, this is at the heart of the present ‘indigene-settler’ dichotomy in *Southern Zaria* and places with similar mix;
- ii. Furthermore, for ethnic groups that got ‘indigenous’ District Heads appointed for them their demands transformed to another level as they now agitate for their District Head to be graded as a chief with their chiefdom liberated from Zaria N.A. The demand arose from the fact that the appointment of Bala Ade Dauke Gora, for example, did not indicate that the district was free from Zaria N.A. control. It only meant that the District Head had been replaced by ‘indigenous’ Zaria N.A. functionary as the new District Head and the coterie of his assistants at the village level continued to pay homage to Zaria N.A. Presently this tendency is manifested in the demands for equality in the grading of the chieftaincy institution in Kaduna State and the rotation of the chairmanship of Kaduna State Council of Emirs and Chiefs where the Emir of Zazzau sits on a permanent basis. Although *Southern Zaria* (now Southern



Kaduna) is no longer under emirate rule their elites believe that the grading of majority of their chiefs as second and third class chiefs while the emir of Zazzau remains a first class chief only ends up indicating the inherent inequality of ethnic groups in Kaduna State (Nyom 2009). The inherent inequality of ethnic groups is thought to be graphically underpinned by the permanent nature of the chairmanship of the Council of Emirs and Chiefs which placed the emir of Zazzau as the chair (Nyom 2009);

- iii. For ethnic groups like the Jaba (Ham) - the one the independent Jaba Chiefdom and the other under Zaria N.A. – the appointment of Bala Ade Dauke Gora would see the intensification of their efforts at unification under Jaba Chiefdom (Ibrahim 2007). However, most of such demands had been countered by petitions from elites of relatively smaller ethnic groups who feared the *unknown* consequent upon being in the proposed district (Kaduna State Government 1991). Under civil administrations this tendency, for example, is discernible in the political alliances frequently formed by elites from the ‘minority’ ethnic groups who often displayed a willingness to construct political networks with elites from northern part of Kaduna State as they were said to ‘doubt’ the ‘sincerity’ of elites from dominant indigenous ethnic groups (Ayuba 2009);
- iv. Ironically, within *Southern Zaria* the appointment of Bala Ade Dauke Gora would expose the fragility of the ‘unity’ among ‘indigenous’ groups in their discontents against Hausa and Fulani Muslim District Heads. In Zangon Katab district for example, the appointment brought to the fore the dormant displeasure of the non-Kataf (Atyab) against what they perceived as Atyab hegemony in the district. Elites from the Chawai (Tsam), Kaje (Bajju), Kamantan and Ikulu ethnic groups saw no sense in an arrangement that brought an end to an ‘alien’ Hausa and Fulani Muslim District Head only to be replaced by an ‘indigenous’ Christian Atyab ‘alien’ District Head. Consequently, the appointment triggered the demands of other groups for a district of their own and a District Head from their individual ethnic groups (Duniya 2009). Currently, this development of ‘a sense of ownership’ is manifested in the drive for an ‘indigenous’ person to be the Chief Executive of Kaduna state as the *Southern Zaria* elites feel that only providence could make this happen. However, in this drive it appears that while various groups would aspire for an individual member of their ethnic group to step into that ‘exalted’ position, dominant groups within the area might not be contented until ‘one of their own’ steps into that position (Ayuba 2009); and
- v. From the appointment of Bala Ade Dauke Gora in 1967, to the creation of eighteen additional Districts in 1991, to the creation of four more chiefdoms in 1995 and twenty one others in 2000 in *Southern Zaria*, the discontent and struggles against ‘Emirate Rule’ had become a dominant theme in the area. This disquiet provided the platform for a number of violent confrontations that occurred in the area with high toll on life and property largely between ‘indigenous’ and ‘settler’ communities which often takes on religious character and spills out of the area. Furthermore, although for over a decade now *Southern Zaria* had been ‘liberated’ from ‘Emirate Rule’ the psychological hang over of this discontent solidified the platform for the lingering agitation for the creation of ‘new’ Kaduna state especially among elites of the ‘indigenous’ large or dominant ethnic groups.

On the whole these historical grievances, with roots in British colonial administrative construct, and their enduring consequences collectively provide the ingredients that feed into and drive critical aspects of the national question from Kaduna State into the larger Nigerian platform. For example,

when viewed as sets of contradictions revolving around the emotive issue of co-existence in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious political space perceived to be privileging particular groups at the expense of others, the national question becomes unavoidably about rights that different peoples share or exercise therein (Momoh 2001). In the contemporary discourse of discontents in Kaduna State and the country at large, the case of Southern Kaduna, with roots in colonial administrative schemes, provides the most concrete case of the expression of the agitations of the ethnic groups from *Stateless* societies both historically and contextually. Historically it has remained unrelenting and each administrative adjustment had opened up new sets of agitations from Southern Kaduna. Contextually while the agitations had remained constant the focus had kept on changing in response to those administrative adjustments while perceptions within Southern Kaduna had remained static. Consequently, even though in post-independence Nigeria important administrative adjustments had taken place at both the local government and State levels which saw them becoming important players in the state and the country at large elites from these *Stateless* societies continue to interpret politics and political developments on an *old style* domination, marginalization and ‘our area is being deliberately neglected’ template.

## Conclusion

The debate regarding colonialism in Africa had seen the recurrence of an unapologetic perspective which sees it as a mere episode that was positive in nature to Africa giving the circumstances at the initial point of contact and the subsequent burden that the white man had to bear in rescuing the continent. This article has shown that colonial experience in the *Stateless* societies of Africa had been accompanied by the intense transmogrification of the native and the native space in a manner that principally guaranteed the realization of colonial objectives. This came in a way that was entirely novel, unsettling and bewildering to the African and provided the impetus for the stationing of native ‘alien’ administrators to service colonial demands in the newly created ethnic clusters. This crop of native administrators together with coterie of anything but indigenous staff at the district level descended upon those societies to provoke catalogue of discontents with far reaching implication for inter-group relations. The arrival of and the subsequent activities of Christian missionaries strengthened the resolve of the people to confront the colonial administrative designs incrementally gravitating in the direction of violent confrontation. In the post-colonial period the situation has essentially remained the same as agitations for the creation of new administrative units, especially the creation of a Southern Kaduna state, have festered unabated. Yet, given the dynamism which underpins the evolution of broad ethnic clusters and identities, the extent to which administrative re-adjustment can resolve the specter of these agitations is debatable. The experience of the *Stateless* societies of *Southern Zaria* highlights the dynamic and complex character of the broad ethnic identities engendered by colonialism. Indeed, the whole experience also inadvertently accentuates the challenges of constructing administrative units on the basis of ethnic considerations. While ethnicity continues to play a major role in Nigeria’s political development, it has simultaneously been at the center of some of the country’s major challenges.

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